THE WORLD.

NUMBER CLXI.

By *ADAM FITZ-ADAM.*

To be continued every THURSDAY.

THURSDAY, *January* the 29th, 1756.

To Mr. FITZ-ADAM.

SIR,

BY a very tender letter, in one of your papers, from an officer's wife, we have ſeen the diſtreſſes of a father and mother, and the miſconduct of a daughter, whoſe meekneſs and gentleneſs of temper have drawn upon herſelf and family the utmoſt miſery and diſtreſs. Give me leave to lay before you a character of another kind, the too great gentleneſs and weakneſs of a ſon.

IN the forty-ſecond year of my age, I was left a widower with an only ſon of ſeven years old, who was ſo exact a likeneſs of his mother, both in perſon and diſpoſition, that from that circumſtance alone I could never prevail upon myſelf to marry again. The image of the excellent

excellent woman I had loſt was perpetually before my eyes, and recalled to my memory the many endearing ſcenes of love and affection that had paſt between us. I heard her voice, I ſaw her mein, and I beheld her ſmiles in my ſon. I reſolved therefore to cultivate this tender plant with more than common care; and I determined to take ſuch proper advantages of his puerile age and hopeful temper, as might engage him to me, not more from moral duty, than from real inclination and attachment. My point was to make him my friend; and I ſo far ſucceeded in that point, that till he was ſeventeen years old, he conſtantly choſe my company preferable to any other.

I SHOULD have told you, that I placed him early at a very great ſchool; and to avoid the miſchiefs that ſometimes ariſe from boarding at a diſtance from parents, I took a houſe near the ſchool, and kept him under my own eye, inviting conſtantly ſuch of his ſchool-fellows to amuſe him, as were pointed out to me by the maſter, or were choſen by my own diſcernment, in conſequence of my ſon's recommendation. All things went on in the moſt promiſing train; but ſtill I ſaw in him a certain eaſineſs of temper, and an exceſs of what is falſely called *good-nature*, but is real *weakneſs*, which I feared muſt prove of dreadful conſequence to him, whenever he ſhould tread the ſtage of the great world. However, it now grew time to advance him to the univerſity; and he went thither, I can with truth ſay it, as free from vice, and as full of virtue, as the fondeſt parent could deſire. What added farther to my hopes, was his ſtrength of body, and the natural abhorrence which he had to wine, even almoſt to a degree of loathing.

WHEN

When he was ſettled at college, I inſiſted upon his writing to me once a week; and I conſtantly anſwered his letters, in the ſtyle andmanner which I thought moſt conducible to the improvement of his knowledge, and the extention and freedom of his thoughts. During ſome time, our mutual correſpondence was kept up with great punctuality and cheerfulneſs; but in leſs than two months it drooped and grew languid on his ſide; and the letters I received from him contained ſeldom more than three lines, telling me, "that he was "much engaged in his ſtudies, and that the departing "poſt-boy hindred him from adding more than that "he was my dutiful ſon."

Not to trouble you with too many particulars, in ſix months after he had been at the univerſity I made him a viſit; but I cannot find words to expreſs the aſtoniſhment I felt, in diſcovering my gentle, eaſy, ſweet-natured ſon, not only turned into a Buck, but a Politician. Never was any young man leſs fitted for either of thoſe characters: never any young man entered deeper into both. He was a Buck without ſpirit or ill-nature, and a Politician without the leaſt knowledge of our laws, hiſtory, or conſtitution. His only pretence to buckism was his affected love of wine; his only ſkill in politics was the art of jumbling a parcel of words together, and applying them, as he imagined, very properly to the times. By this means he became diſtinguiſhed among his aſſociates, as the jollieſt, honeſteſt toaſt-maſter in the univerſity. But, alas! this was a part aſſumed by my ſon, from a deſire of pleaſing, mixed with a dread of offending the perſons into whoſe clubs and bumper-ceremonies he had unhappily enliſted himſelf. Poor miſerable youth! he was acting in oppoſition to his own nature,

nature, of which had he followed the dictates, he would neither have medled with party, politics, nor wine; but would have fulfilled, or at leaſt have aimed at, that beautiful character of Pamphilus in Terence, ſo well delineated in the Bevil of ſir Richard Steele's Conſcious Lovers.

To preſerve his health, I withdrew him from the univerſity as expeditiouſly and with as little noiſe as I could, and brought him home, perfectly reſtored, as I vainly imagined, to himſelf. But I was miſtaken. The laſt perſon who was with him, always commanded him. The companions of his midnight hours obliterated his duty to his father, and, notwithſtanding his good ſenſe, made him, like the ſimple beaſt in the fable, fancy himſelf a lion, becauſe he had put on the lion's ſkin. With the ſame diſpoſition, had he been a woman, I am perſuaded he muſt have been a proſtitute, not ſo much from evil deſires, as from the impoſſibility of denying a requeſt. He worſhiped vice, as the Indians adore the devil, not from inclination, but timidity. He bought intemperance at the price of his life; his health paid the intereſt money, during many months of a miſerable decay; at length his death, little more than two years ago, diſcharged the debt entirely, and left me with the ſad conſolation of having performed my duty to him, from the time I loſt his mother, till the time he expired in my arms.

I HAVE borne my loſs like a man; but I have often lamented the untowardneſs of my fate, which ſnatched from me an only child, whoſe diſpoſition was moſt amiable, but whoſe virtues had not ſufficient ſtrength to ſupport themſelves. He was

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too modeſt to be reſolute; too ſincere to be wary; too gentle to oppoſe; and too humble to keep up his dignity. This perhaps was the ſingular part of his character; but he had other faults in common with his cotemporaries: he miſtook prejudices for principles: he thought the retraction of an error a deviation from honour: his averſions aroſe rather from names than perſons: he called obſtinacy ſteadineſs; and he imagined that no friendſhip ought ever to be broken, which had been begun, like the orgies of Bacchus, amidſt the frantic revels of wine.

Thus, ſir, I have ſet before you, I hope without any acrimony, the ſource and progreſs of my irreparable misfortune. It will be your part to warn the riſing generation, in what manner to avoid the terrible rocks of miſtaken honour, and too pliant good-nature.

In the laſt century, the falſe notions of honour deſtroyed our youth by faſhionable duels; and they were induced to murder each other by viſionary crowns of applauſe. The falſe notions of honour, in the preſent age, deſtroy our youth by the force of bumpers, and the mad conſequences ariſing from every kind of liquor that can intoxicate and overturn ſenſe, reaſon, and reflection. Why are not healths to be eaten as well as drank? Why may not the ſpells and magic ariſing from mouthfuls of beef and mutton, be as efficacious towards the accompliſhment of our wiſhes, as gallons of port, or overflowing bowls of punch? Certainly they might. I hope therefore that by your public admonition, the young men of our days, who eat much leſs than they drink, may drink much leſs than they eat: and I muſt farther add, that as it may be dange-

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